

THE GULL



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Noreen Weeden

GGAS instructors Bob Lewis (far left, seated) and Eddie Bartley (far right, kneeling) with their Birds of the Sierra class.

GGAS Classes—Shorebirds to Songbirds

In early 2005, Golden Gate Audubon posed a question: If we're involved in education through field trips, conservation activism, and school programs, why don't we teach classes for adults? Answering the question led to a partnership with Albany Adult School in the East Bay—and over the next six years to sponsoring dozens of classes given on both sides of the bay and taken by hundreds of birders of all levels.

The collaboration between GGAS and the school launched in the spring of 2005 with two classes, field identification and spring migration, taught by Rusty Scalf and Bob Lewis. The pair were hardly new to teaching. Rusty had been an instructor at AAS since the late 1980s. Bob had joined him in 1993. Even before the GGAS-AAS partnership, their classes had become so popular that many birders who showed up to register had to be turned away.

To satisfy the demand, Anne Hoff was asked to take over beginning birding from Bob. Eddie Bartley came on board in late 2005 to help teach birding basics. Soon thereafter, Denise Wight was recruited to offer instruction in birdsong. With Bob Lewis at the helm of the GGAS Education Committee by early 2006 and a talented pool of Bay Area instructors to draw from, new classes and venues were gradually added to the roster. Eddie Bartley brought his birding basics to San Francisco's

Annual Awards Honor Volunteers

At the May Birdathon dinner, both the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award and the Paul Covel Conservation Education Award were given to volunteers for their major contributions to Golden Gate Audubon. Elsie Roemer (1893–1991) was an educator and activist who successfully worked to protect wetlands in Alameda. A refuge on Alamedas so often shared by Inc., the Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary bears her name. Paul Covel (1909–1990), a recipient of an Elsie Roemer award in 1989, was a park naturalist and educator who inspired many children and adults through his pioneering interpretive programs at Lake Merritt in Oakland.

ELSIE ROEMER CONSERVATION AWARDEES

Motivated by a passion for nature and a conservation vision, Pat Fawcett joined Golden Gate Audubon three decades ago. As a co-founder of Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR), since the beginning, Pat has served GGAS in small and not-so-small ways. She was on the board of directors in the 1990s and early 2000s and took on the jobs of corresponding and recording secretary.

When Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR) was founded in 1997, Pat was right there as a charter member. As well as volunteering as recording secretary—a position she continues to this day—she immersed herself in

ANNUAL AWARDS



7 Summer Pelagic Trips

8 New SF Classes at Heron's Head Park

8 Trip to Belize for 2012

I See Birds

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Design and Layout: Mark Welther

In 2005, my friends (and GGAS members) Susan Andres and Todd Jersey invited me on a bird walk in Pt. Reyes, led by Rich Stallcup, one of the founders of PRBO Conservation Science. For a couple of hours, we strolled around the Bear Valley Visitor Center and nearby sites. I had the startling experience of standing in familiar spots and observing, up close, birds that had previously been invisible to me: Acorn Woodpeckers across the parking lot; Great Egrets clearly in view nesting in a treetop 50 yards away; a flock of Turkey Vultures wobbling overhead; grebes mingling in a pond full of (to me) miscellaneous ducks; and, most amazing, a family of Barn Owls in the crook of a tree about 20 feet away, staring at us. This last experience was the one that really stayed with me.

By the time I joined Golden Gate Audubon as executive director a little more than two years ago, I was conscious of birds and understood their general importance to biodiversity. But I still couldn't distinguish more than a few species and knew very little about bird migration, nesting, or behavior. That's when my GGAS education began with a 90-minute bird walk with Bob Lewis on the San Francisco Bay Trail in the East Shore State Park. Starting then, the key for me has been to get out in the field as often as possible with experienced birders and to practice what I've learned.

Now, thanks to my GGAS education, I see birds everywhere in the Bay Area and marvel at their resilience living in this urban environment. I am also passing this education on to others, as I did at a recent dinner party, when I explained to a dog owner the importance of protecting threatened Western Snowy Plovers at San Francisco's Crissy Field (see page 1 of the May-June *Gull*).

I believe that my former lack of awareness of birds is common among many Bay Area residents. So, when Conservation Director Mike Lynes and our conservation committee chairs Phil Price, Leora Feeney, Linda Vallee, and David Anderson speak to the general public and elected officials, they spend a surprising amount of time explaining the most basic concepts: that the health of birds is a reflection of environmental and human health; that when trees are cut down during nesting season, birds will be harmed; that increasing populations of feral cats in Golden Gate Park are connected to the decline of the park's California Quail.

In this issue, we feature an article about Golden Gate Audubon's birding classes (taught by Bob Lewis and many others). Classes and their associated field trips are invaluable to GGAS and are among the primary ways that we attract new members. I especially like the story of Jacqueline Craig (see page 12), who believes in taking the same classes over and over. She knows that learning hatches with consciousness, grows wings with education, and soars with repetition and practice.

Since 1917, Golden Gate Audubon has been focused on birds, raising consciousness, educating, and practicing out in the field. These activities form the foundation of our programs and make us unique among conservation groups. This fall, as we undertake a planning process to set our course and goals for the next three years, we will strive to recognize, strengthen, and build upon this foundation.

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

Marsha Mather-Thrift Leaves GGAS

Following the May Birdathon dinner, Golden Gate Audubon bid a fond farewell to Development Director Marsha Mather-Thrift. Marsha has accepted the position of founding executive director of the Rosie the Riveter Trust in Richmond. Please join us in thanking Marsha for her excellent work to support Golden Gate Audubon's programs and in wishing her luck.



Pat Gannon (right) receiving an Elsie Roemer award from FAWR's Leora Feeney



Chris Bard (right), recipient of a Paul Covell award, with Diane Ross Leech, GGAS board president.



Eddie Bartley, left, honored with a Paul Covell award, with Executive Director Mark Welther

ANNUAL AWARDS from page 1

FAWR's many activities. She attends work parties at the refuge, tables at public events, goes to public meetings, and assists in classroom presentations. Last year, she offered to organize work party volunteers. Every December, she participates in Christmas Bird Counts by recording and tallying the sightings for her team.

"Pat is the kind of volunteer every organization dreams to have," Leora says. "She is always there doing the not so flashy, but absolutely necessary tasks—for decades. She is the steady support that allows for big accomplishments. FAWR would not be the committee it is without this remarkable woman working with us."

A fateful encounter in 2000 prompted Noreen Weeden to get involved with GGAS's San Francisco Conservation Committee (SFCC). While on a bird walk, she met Bob Bennett, then chair of the committee, and Matt Zlatunich, an active

member, who urged her to attend a meeting. Noreen initially volunteered for a project about creating backyard habitats. She enthusiastically took on other tasks, such as regularly attending numerous city and county hearings about critical environmental issues and representing GGAS at events. In 2006, Noreen took over as chair, heading the SFCC until early this year.

Thanks to her initiative, the committee strengthened its relationship with the Port of San Francisco, which has led to protection of habitat along the southern waterfront. "Noreen was highly effective in expanding the presence of the committee," says Dan Murphy, a longtime SFCC member. "She took over our advocacy on the bay side of the city. Her work with city agencies, particularly the Port of San Francisco, resulted in much of the progress we've made with Heron's Head Park, Pier 94, and Yosemite Slough. No matter what was going on over there, Noreen was a presence."

Another hallmark of the SFCC's projects during Noreen's tenure was the committee's increasing collaboration with groups such as the Sierra Club, Nature in the City, and the California Native Plant Society. Among her other accomplishments, she actively promoted Lights Out for Birds, which resumes for the fall migration (see page 4).

PAUL COVEL CONSERVATION EDUCATION AWARDEES

Chris Bard, a GGAS member since 1990, joined Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge in 2004. She immediately jumped in to help FAWR by digitizing and orga-



Noreen Weeden accepting an Elsie Roemer award from Dan Murphy

nizing the committee's Least Tern natural history presentations, given each spring to third graders. Every year for the past five, she has visited hundreds of students in local schools. "The students of today will be keepers of the environment tomorrow," Chris says. "Youngsters educated about the plight of the Least Tern will take an interest in protecting the terns and their environment."

Chris, with her husband, Gary, designed the computer program that maintains seven years of data from the twice-monthly bird surveys of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. She attends public meetings to represent FAWR and GGAS and participates in work parties at the refuge, often with Gary. Chris and Gary worked together to prepare a presentation about the refuge, which has been shown in Alameda and at U.S. Fish and Wildlife conferences in California and Nevada—to rave reviews.

"Chris has tremendous skill at everything she does," says Leora Feeney. "Her chosen lifetime career as an educator of young people has allowed her to put her experience into teaching natural history and ecology to those she knows so well. We are truly lucky to have her on our team."

Eddie Bartley has been an invaluable contributor to Golden Gate Audubon's education programs ever since he taught his first birding basics class in late 2005. He went on to offer many versions of beginning birding in both the East Bay and San Francisco, varying the classes and tailoring them to the changing seasons. Year after

ANNUAL AWARDS continued on page 4



CONSERVATION CORNER

BURROWING OWL DOCENT TRAINING

Every year, Western Burrowing Owls overwinter at Cesar Chavez Park in Berkeley, arriving in fall and departing in spring. GGAS docents point out the owls to park users and talk about the need to protect these locally endangered birds. Docents are encouraged to make a commitment for site visits at least twice each month from September through March. Dates and times are flexible. Training for the new season will be held on Saturday, September 10, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is open to anyone interested in this exciting program. A \$5 donation is suggested to cover the cost of lunch and training materials. To register, call 510.843.2222.

SAY YES TO BIRD-SAFE BUILDINGS

The San Francisco Planning Commission will decide in July whether to approve a proposal from Golden Gate Audubon, the American Bird Conservancy, and the San Francisco Planning Department to publish city-wide *Standards for Bird Safe Buildings*. These would be the first bird-friendly building guidelines in the Bay Area and are

modeled after the successful program in New York. Collisions kill more than 1 billion birds in North America each year, and bird-safe building guidelines are a necessary step toward reducing these unnecessary mortalities. The guidelines would apply to new buildings or buildings planning major rehabilitation in locations most dangerous to birds.

What can you do? Please check our website for the date of the planning commission hearing in July and attend to speak in support of the standards. E-mail nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org if you are interested in this program.

LIGHTS OUT FOR BIRDS— SAN FRANCISCO AND EAST BAY

August 15 through October 31 is fall migration and the time to encourage businesses to participate in Lights Out for Birds by turning off unnecessary lights from dusk to dawn. The program saves natural resources, cuts energy bills, and, most importantly, can save the lives of numerous birds. To sign up or learn more about Lights Out, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/conservation or e-mail mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org.

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year, he introduced new classes, including classes on birds of prey, which benefited from his expertise as a nest monitor and hawk-watcher for Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. The Romance of Birds focused on reproduction and nesting.

"There's no more enthusiastic teacher than Eddie. Students love him," says Bob Lewis, a recipient of one of last year's education awards. "He's a great photographer and illustrates his talks with images he's captured in the field. And he is very aware of environmental issues in the city, so his classes often emphasize a conservation issue of concern to GGAS."

Volunteering with his partner, Noreen Weeden, as a monitor after the 2007 *Cosco Busan* oil spill in San Francisco Bay made Eddie realize that city agencies were often unaware of local wildlife species and how they evolved to live in the urban environment. To address this gap, in early 2008, he created Wild San Francisco, A Natural History, a presentation he has modified for youth groups, schools, and senior groups. "It has been one of the most rewarding presentations I've done," Eddie says, "because many folks are surprised at the beauty of the wildlife around us, and you can tell they are inspired to learn more."

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from March 24 to May 20, 2011.

EAGLE (\$1,000 OR MORE)

Anonymous, Jean Connor

PERFECT FIVE EAGLES (\$500 TO \$999)

Eleanor Briccetti, Ruth and Alan Tobey

LEADERSHIP (\$200 TO \$499)

David and Annie Armstrong, Linda Eby, Dennis and Lucy O'Connor, Jennifer Paquette, Ann and Mike Richter

CHAMPION (\$100 TO \$199)

Ed and Mildred Bennett, Russell and Ellen Breslauer, Hazel Bright (HB Resources Insurance Services, Inc.), David J. and Lanice L. Clark, Margaret Deane, Michelle C. Douskey, Donald D. and Elaine Dvorak, Lois Enos, Shelly Horwitz, Dorothy Kakimoto, Charles N. and Carleen B. Keating, Marcia and Larry Kolb, Bethellen Levitan and Raymond Trautman, Catherine S. Lyon, Sally Mathews, Valerie and John Matzger, Toni Montez, Deborah O'Brien, Stephen Waldman, Steven Weissman and Laura Mahanes, Mitch Youngman

WINGSPAN

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MEMORIAL GIFTS

In memory of Richard G. Allen: Mary Craig, Harvey and Patricia Sue Coates, Judith Dunham, Iris V. Read, Joyce Short

In memory of Miles T. McKey: Miles R. and Mel McKey (The Miles T. McKey Memorial Fund)

GIFTS IN HONOR OF

Kristin Bunting, in honor of her many friends at Golden Gate Audubon
Curtis Hoesing, in honor of Joan Kotlyar

Janet Mandelstam, Sally Matthews, in honor of Dave Quady's Honey Lake trip
Dennis O'Connor, Rondal Snodgrass, in honor of Helen McKenna

IN-KIND GIFTS

Jennifer Daggy: one spotting scope and two tripods
REI San Francisco and Watershed Nursery for our 2011 Volunteer Appreciation Party
Scientific Certification Systems: office chairs

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

Thomas Holmes for Nora Holmes, Donald Sanford for David and Carla Fujikawa

EMERGENCY GIFT MATCH

The Clorox Company Foundation, Congregation Emanu-El, IBM Corporation, Pacific Gas & Electric Foundation, The Schwab Fund For Charitable Giving

GRANTS

Cal EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants Program, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation



SPEAKER SERIES

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at What Happens When Wildlife Meets an Oil Spill

By Kristin E. Elias, Oiled Wildlife Care Network

Berkeley: Thursday, July 21—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program (free for GGAS members, \$5 nonmembers)

In the 2007 *Cosco Busan* oil spill that dumped 53,000 gallons of oil into San Francisco Bay, 31 species of oiled and traumatized birds were rescued and taken to the Oiled Wildlife Care Network's 12,000 square foot center in Fairfield, where veterinarians and trained volunteers cleaned and rehabilitated the birds, eventually saving and releasing 38.5 percent of them back to the wild. Three OWCN staff members will describe the entire process of saving oiled wildlife, from organizing and training volunteers, to collecting and transferring injured animals to care facilities, to treating and rehabilitating them. The OWCN, a world leader in oiled wildlife response, comprises 29 member organizations and 12 facilities in California and is administered by the UC Davis Wildlife Health Center within the School of Veterinary Medicine.

Becky Elias, who received her graduate degree in wildlife ecology from Washington State University, coordinates the volunteer efforts by OWCN members. Emily Whitmer, a registered veterinary technician who has worked with a wide variety of marine wildlife, provides essential support of wildlife care and rehabilitation. Kyra Mills-Parker, who holds a graduate degree from UC Irvine, organizes and leads field teams to collect and transport oiled wildlife to care facilities.

Berkeley Speaker Series: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm.



Surf Scoter being released after treatment
Photo: M. Mills-Parker

From Parlor and Plate to Microscopes and Art

Moe Flannery and Sharon Beals

San Francisco: Thursday, August 18—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program (free for GGAS members, \$5 nonmembers)

The California Academy of Sciences Ornithology and Mammalogy Collection houses more than 11,000 egg and nest specimens. Moe Flannery, collections manager, will discuss the history of egg and nest collecting, from the era when eggs and nests graced the parlors of the fashionable hobbyist and the menus of restaurants, to their modern-day importance as repositories of DNA and information about changes in the environment. Sharon Beals will present the photographs of nests and eggs she made at the academy while working on the book *Nests: Fifty Nests and the Birds that Built Them*. She will also share what she learned about the habits of the nest builders and the conservation issues facing these birds today.

Moe Flannery received her master of sciences in ecology and systematic biology from San Francisco State University. Sharon Beals is an ardent environmentalist, photographer, and author. For the book, she also photographed at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo and the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at UC Berkeley.

San Francisco Speaker Series: First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary. Visit www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html, and use the Map It! link on the left for directions. Public transit, street parking, and parking in a lot for a fee are available.



California Towhee nest
Photo: Sharon Beals

Return of the Western Snowy Plovers

Golden Gate Audubon will partner with the National Park Service for a beach cleanup on Saturday, July 9, 9 a.m. to noon, at Ocean Beach and Crissy Field in San Francisco. Please come help us with the crucial tasks of keeping natural areas natural for both birds and birders. It's good work, good exercise, and a good outdoor time. To sign up, please contact nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org

Help Restore Bird Habitat

We invite you to join workdays at our restoration sites. For site details and directions, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

- Pier 94, San Francisco: July 2, August 6, 9 a.m. – noon.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, Oakland: July 23, August 20, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Golden Gate Park Bison Paddock, San Francisco: July 16, August 20, 9 a.m. – noon (with SF Recreation and Parks).
- Lands End East Wash, SF Presidio: August 27, 1 – 4 p.m. (with Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy).

Mark your calendar for Coastal Cleanup Day on September 17.

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Join other Golden Gate Audubon members who are downloading our newsletter from our website rather than receiving it in the mail. You will help save paper and reduce our expenses for printing and mailing. Best of all, the photographs in the online version of the *Gull* are in color. As each newsletter is published, we will e-mail you a link. To choose the *Gull* online, e-mail ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or call 510.843.2222.



FIELD TRIPS

\$ Entrance fee

Biking trip

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, July 3, August 7, 8 – 10:30 a.m.
Ginny Marshall, ginnysbirder@sbcglobal.net; Dominik Mosur, polskata@yahoo.com

Meet at front gate of garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. The garden has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginners develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds. The garden charges \$7/person if you are not an SF resident or garden member. Bring identification for residency and membership status.

Corona Heights

Fridays, July 15, August 19, 8 – 10 a.m.
Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com; Charlie Hibbard

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. On this monthly trip, we will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for

residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Alviso—Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Biking trip

Saturday, July 23

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Santa Clara/Great America Capitol Corridor train station or at 9 a.m. at Alviso County Park. From Alviso, we will ride on streets to Disk Dr. to look for Burrowing Owls, then head to the NWR visitor center, make a circuit of the unpaved trail around the marsh, and return to the park. Distance is about 15 miles. Bring lunch. Bicycle helmet required. Trip ends about noon. Leader usually arrives by transit, so delays are possible. It is advisable to call or e-mail for cell phone number and indicate how you are arriving. Rain cancels.

Car: Take I-880 south, then Hwy. 237 west. Go 2.2 miles and take N. First St. exit. Turn right on N. First. In about 1 mile, it becomes Taylor St. In one block, turn right on Gold St., then left on Elizabeth St. and right on Hope St., and continue to Alviso County Park and trailhead parking for NWR. Transit: Capitol Corridor train #723 from Emeryville departs at 7:20 a.m.

We will ride on trails and streets to trailhead. Return is on train #734 at 1:02 p.m. (next train is #736 at 2:32). Arrive at station well in advance to purchase ticket and get on platform; senior fares at a 15% discount are available for those 62 and over. Contact leader if you want to participate in a 10-ride ticket from Emeryville (\$98 or about \$20 per person per round-trip; single round-trip ticket is \$32).

Birds of the Bay

Biking trip

Sundays, July 24, August 14, 10 a.m.

Carol Kiser, 415.447.5000

This walk for children and beginners starts with a brief orientation in the use of binoculars and guide books. Then we will spend an hour or so looking for resident and migrating birds. Meet at entrance to Hyde Street Pier at Hyde and Jefferson on the western border of Fisherman's Wharf. Bring books and binoculars if you have them. A hat and layers of clothing are recommended. Nearby parking is at the foot of Van Ness Ave. (free for 4 hours), Ghirardelli Square, and the Anchorage.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesdays, July 27, August 24, 9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthtobey@gmail.com

Meet at large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. This is the summer lull, though the cormorants should still be nesting in the trees on the newly refurbished islands. But there's never a truly bad month at the lake—always something to see and talk about, if only the geese on molt-migration.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking is at boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry, via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland, is probably free on weekday mornings, but if the kiosk is occupied when you arrive, buy a \$2 (two-hour) ticket and park in the boathouse lot, where no one checks how long cars sit.

Carpooling and Other Field Trip Resources

If you are going on a field trip, would you welcome company? Do you have room in your car to take other birders? To help find a ride or offer a ride, sign up with GGA's carpool group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>. When you sign up, you answer a few simple questions, then receive a confirming e-mail. Once you are a member, you post messages under "Need Ride" or "Offer Ride," along with the destination and date. The more birders who sign up, the more useful the group will be. Birders are encouraged to help the driver with expenses by contributing to the cost of fuel and bridge tolls.

East Bay Regional District: www.ebparks.org/parks

SF Bay Trail: <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>

Bay Area transit: www.transitinfo.org

California state parks: www.parks.ca.gov

National parks: www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm

National wildlife refuges: www.fws.gov/refuges

Mono Lake and Eastern Sierra

Friday – Sunday, July 29 – 31

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net; Emilie Strauss, 510.540.8749

We will meet in the Mono Lake area at 8 a.m., Friday, July 29. We will visit the west and south shores of Mono Lake, Lundy Canyon, and possibly Saddlebag Lake, depending on snow level. Species observed will likely include Green-tailed Towhee, Sage Thrasher, American Dipper, and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. Wildflower displays should be fabulous. Two of the three days will require significant hikes up to 6 miles at high elevation, and the third day may be at over 10,000 feet. Please be in good physical condition. Limit 20 participants. Please contact Rusty Scalf to reserve your spot.

The heavy snowpack of 2011 may require scheduling adjustments to be determined in early July. Participants are responsible for their own transportation, food, and lodging arrangements; information can be found at www.leevining.com. Several stops will require modest fees, and on the last day there is a boat trip that costs about \$15. Passage through Yosemite National Park, if you choose this route, may be \$20 or more per car. We are hoping Tioga Pass will be open by late July.

Half Moon Bay Pelagic Trips

July 30, 31; August 1; September 16, 17,
18, 19; October 2, 10, 15; November 22

Debi Shearwater,
debi@shearwaterjourneys.com, and
guest leaders (Joe Morlan on August 1)

The trips depart from the Huck Finn Center at Pillar Point Harbor in Half Moon Bay, which is easy to reach from San Francisco and the East Bay. This may also allow us to reach seabirds such as storm-petrel flocks more easily than from other ports. Excellent sightings in 2009 include a Short-tailed Albatross and a White-chinned Petrel (second record for North America, first live sighting). In 2010, our July 31 trip recorded Cook's Petrels in both San Francisco and San Mateo counties. The trips on July 30 and 31 and August 1 offer a chance to see Cook's Petrels, which were abundant last year.

The boat departs at 7 a.m. and returns 3:30-4:30 p.m. Fee is \$150 (nonrefundable) for GGA members and \$175 for nonmembers. Fuel surcharge is not included. Please make your reservation by sending a check to Deb Shearwater, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024. Your check confirms your reservation. Include the name, address, and phone/e-mail for each person in your party. You will receive a confirmation letter by snail mail.

Farallon Islands Pelagic Trip

Sunday, August 7

Debi Shearwater,
debi@shearwaterjourneys.com
and guest leaders

On this pelagic trip to the unique breeding seabird colonies of the Farallon Islands, our main target is Tufted Puffin but we will also see many other seabirds as well as whales. Dolphins are possible too. Last year's sightings also included Black-footed Albatross; Northern Fulmar; Sooty, Pink-footed, and Buller's Shearwaters; Ashy, Black, and Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels; Pomarine, Parasitic, and Long-tailed Jaegers; Pigeon Guillemot Xantus's Murrelet; and Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets. Whales included Blue, Minke, Humpback, and Gray.

The boat departs from Emeryville at 7:30 a.m. and returns 3-4 p.m. Fee is \$129 (nonrefundable) for GGAS members and \$152 for nonmembers; fuel surcharge is not included. The trip sells out in advance. Please make your reservation by sending a check to Debi Shearwater, PO Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024. Your check confirms your reservation. Include the name, address, and phone/e-mail for each person in your party. You will receive a confirmation letter by snail mail.

• Richmond to Berkeley on the SF Bay Trail

Observations Online

Bruce Mast's most recent column on notable sightings may be found on the GGAS website. It includes details about the rescue of the injured Flammulated Owl pictured here, which was found in Hayward and taken to a wildlife care facility for rehabilitation.

Saturday, August 20

Kathy Lamm 5/10/54 1/2

1.1.3. *Intertidal*

Snag Lake Backpack Trip

Friday – Monday, August 26 – 29

Robin Pulich; David Rice, 510 527 7210,
drice2@comcast.net

On this annual camping and birding trip to Lassen, we will backpack 3 miles to Snag Lake and spend three nights in primitive camping by a stream near a large meadow. We should see flocks of mixed warblers and other songbirds, plus resident birds of the mountains, Bald Eagles, and migrating shorebirds. We will be above 6,000 feet. To avoid impact on the fragile habitat, the trip is limited to 10 people. Participants are responsible for their own gear and food, some shared meals can be arranged. Contact David Rice to reserve a space.



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CLASSES

GGAS CLASSES IN SAN FRANCISCO

The following classes meet at the EcoCenter at Heron's Head Park, located south of Islais Creek along the southern waterfront at the east end of Cargo Way off Third Street. Free parking is in the lot at the east end of Cargo Way. Public transportation options include the T-Third line and MUNI bus routes. Each class is limited to 20 participants. To register, call 510.843.2222 or go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/education/classes.

Inclement weather postpones field trips. For the Sunday field trips, carpooling will be encouraged and coordinated at the Saturday presentations.

Wild Birds of San Francisco: An Introduction

Eddie Bartav - eddie@naturetrip.com, www.naturetrip.com

Saturday, August 20, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., local walks and presentation; Sunday, August 21, 9 a.m. – noon, field trip

Join a fun and enthusiastic group in an introduction to many of the amazing birds that inhabit San Francisco and discover the local habitats where they can be found. Presentations include colorful bird imagery, info on optics, ID techniques, physiology, guides, and a little taxonomy. We'll have an opportunity to see resident and summer breeding birds raising new families and meet birds returning from their northerly breeding range. Fee: \$40.

Peeps to Phalaropes: The Shorebirds of California

Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com, www.naturetrip.com

Saturday, August 27, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., local walks and presentation; Sunday, August 28, 2 – 5 p.m., field trip

By late August, hundreds of thousands of "wind birds" have winged their way from their northern breeding grounds to San Francisco Bay, one of the largest peep food suppliers in North America. In this new class, we will focus on the identification, amazing evolutionary adaptations, and life histories of the 30-plus

shorebird species that reside here, pass through in migration, or overwinter in California. On Sunday's field trip, we'll have more opportunities to view and focus on this order while not ignoring the myriad of other birds along the shoreline. Saturday's class is cosponsored by Literacy for Environmental Justice. Fee: \$50.

ALBANY ADULT SCHOOL FALL CLASS PREVIEW

Fall classes held in the East Bay at the Albany Adult School may include a shorebird class with Bob Lewis and Rusty Scalf, birdsong adventures with Denise Wight, and one or two other classes. For details, check the GGAS website, or look for the listings in the September-October *Gull*.

BIRDING WITH JOE MORLAN

The fall semester of Joe Morlan's classes on North American birds, endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon, starts in mid-September. Field Ornithology II/part A, a continuing study of land birds including thrushes, thrashers, pipits, and warblers, meets on Wednesdays, September 14 to October 26. Part B starts November 2 and ends December 14. Field Ornithology III/part A, including hawks, falcons, rails, and plovers, meets on Thursdays, September 15 to October 27. Part B starts November 3 and ends December 15. Ornithology I is not offered this semester.

Joe is the coordinator of the Northern California Birdbox sponsored by GGAS and the author of *Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area* and *Birds of Northern California*. All classes meet 7–9:15 p.m. at Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street (free parking provided). Optional field trips are arranged for weekends. For information on textbooks, fees, and registration (early sign-up is strongly advised), go to <http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmoran> or call 415.561.1860. To enroll online, go to www.evolveww.com/ce.ccsf. A 10 percent discount is offered for registering at least one week early.

Belize—Jewel of the Caribbean

Known for its largely undisturbed tropical forests, abundance of rivers, tremendous diversity of flora and fauna, outstanding birding, and rich human history, Belize is one of the world's finest natural destinations. Within the borders of this sparsely populated Central American country lies a great variety of habitats, including mangroves and beaches, rivers and lagoons, coastal savanna, pine forest, and broadleaf tropical forest. From the spoiled comfort of some of Belize's best nature lodges—Bird's Eye View, Pook's Hill, Five Sister's, and Lamanai Outpost

Lodge—we'll explore these habitats and their rich wildlife on this February 2012 trip with leader Mark Pretti.

Among the 570-plus species of birds are toucans, woodcreepers, tanagers, antbirds, hummingbirds, trogons, manakins, raptors, and waders. We'll likely encounter howler monkeys, iguanas, crocodiles, and other tropical creatures. The itinerary also includes a visit to Mayan ruins at Lamanai and Caracol, and a night safari boat ride.

Naturalist and bird guide Mark Pretti has led previous trips for Travel with Golden

Gate Audubon, among them tours of Oaxaca, Mexico, in 2009 and 2010. Dates of the Belize trip are February 3–13, 2012. Cost is \$3,200 per person, double occupancy, from Belize City and includes all lodging, meals, guides, and ground transportation, as well as a \$150 tax-deductible donation to Golden Gate Audubon. The trip is limited to 10 participants. A second trip, February 13 to 23, 2012, will be added if the first one fills. For a detailed itinerary, contact Chris Bard, GGAS Travel Coordinator, at chrisbard@earthlink.net or 510.522.5699.

Birdathoners Know How to Celebrate!

On May 12, Birdathon 2011 came to a festive close with a night of terrific food, well-deserved awards, and fun prizes. More than a hundred Birdathon trip leaders, bird counters, sponsors, and guests gathered at the Brazilian Room in Berkeley's Tilden Regional Park. Guests enjoyed an elegant dinner catered by 269 The Arlington, special wines supplied by Alameda's Rock Wall Wine Company, and great local beer courtesy of Lagunitas Brewing Company.

The program kicked off with Golden Gate Audubon's two most prestigious annual awards, the Paul Covell Conservation Education Award and the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award (see page 1). Festivities continued with an exclusive screening of the nearly completed Eco-Education promotional film, produced for GGAS by director Jordan Plotksy (of "Bay Area Backroads") and made possible by funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and PG&E. The film shows Eco-Education Program Director Anthony DeCicco, volunteers, and high school interns in the classroom teaching elementary school students from some of the Bay Area's most underserved schools, as well as the students and their families on field trips to Muir Beach and other Bay Area sites. Look for the video this summer on the GGAS website—you will be inspired!

The film provided the perfect introduction for the inaugural Miles T. McKey Memorial Scholarships (for more on the scholarships, see page 10). Anthony presented awards of \$500 each to two outstanding high school seniors, Chan Saelee and Ezekiel Perez, to support their college plans. Chan and Zeke have both excelled as Eco-Education interns, teaching and mentoring third, fourth, and fifth graders and their families in this award-winning program.

Next came the Birdathon awards. This year, we presented two Outstanding Birdathon Fundraising Awards, to the top field trip leader and top individual. Bob Lewis took Top Fundraising Trip Leader (winner of a getaway to the historic Tallman Hotel in Clear Lake along with a tour of the Six Sigma Vineyards), with Eddie Bartley close behind in second. Glen Tepke was the Top

Individual Fundraiser, winning a four-day stay in the mountains near the Stanislaus River at Donington, followed by Chris Baird in second and Louise Harr in third.

The award for Most Species in 24 Hours went to The Dippers (Glen Tepke, Patricia Bacchetti, Carol Chetkovich, Mark Razon, and Martijn Verdoes) with 142 species. The Most Species in Four Hours Award was taken by the Contra Costa Song Chasers (Denise Wight and Kitty O'Neill) with 107 species.

Topping the evening was the Best Bird Award, chosen by a panel of GGAS's Christmas Bird Count compilers—Dave Quady, Alan Hopkins, Dan Murphy, and

Bob Lewis. Dave presented the awards to Eddie Bartley and Noreen Weeden, who swept the Regional and National Best Bird Awards with their sightings of a Baltimore Oriole in San Francisco and a black-vented Oriole in Lese.

Golden Gate Audubon also presented a special award to Premiere Sponsor Sam and Maria Swerz of Scope City for their two outstanding years of Birdathon support. Other sponsors attending included representatives from the Port of Oakland, Oakland International Airport, iBird, Better World Telecom, and New Resource Bank, as well as the Law Offices of Andrew L. Packard.

BIRDATHONERS www.ggas.org/birdathon

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and Jackson & Tuerck Attorneys at Law. For a complete list of sponsors, see page 9.

Although teams outdid themselves to come up with terrific names and interesting birding schemes, two creative efforts deserve special recognition. Ivan Samuels birded "Miwok style" to demonstrate how much one can see without outside aids. He birded for 24 hours minus clock, optics, or electronic gear, and covered West Marin by camping, hiking, and kayaking. In the end, Ivan spotted 102 species. Dominik Mosur and friends biked more than 50 miles to tally more than a hundred species during their four-hour effort.

In total, 20 teams registered for the Birdathon. They sported names like the Rockin' TVs, MammaBirds, Contra Costa Song Chasers, Wrentits, Murphy's MOB, and Balding Eagles.

Many thanks to the wonderful and inspiring people and companies who took part in and supported Birdathon 2011 this year! Please support our sponsors listed in this issue of the *Gull* as a thank-you for their pledges to our conservation and education programs.

Birdathon 2011 was a rousing success, producing a fun event that raised nearly \$30,000 to support Golden Gate Audubon's important work. Please make your plans to join the fun for Birdathon 2012.

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

Miles T. McKey Memorial Fund

The Miles T. McKey Memorial Fund, created by Miles and Mel McKey to honor the memory of their son, supports the environmental education of underserved young people who might not otherwise learn about their local environment. We are currently working with the Eco-Education Program's high school interns, sponsoring team-building outings and educational workshops. Golden Gate Audubon also seeks private donations to expand this year's scholarships into an annual program for those interns advancing to environmental careers. For information, please contact Mark Welther at 510.843.9912.



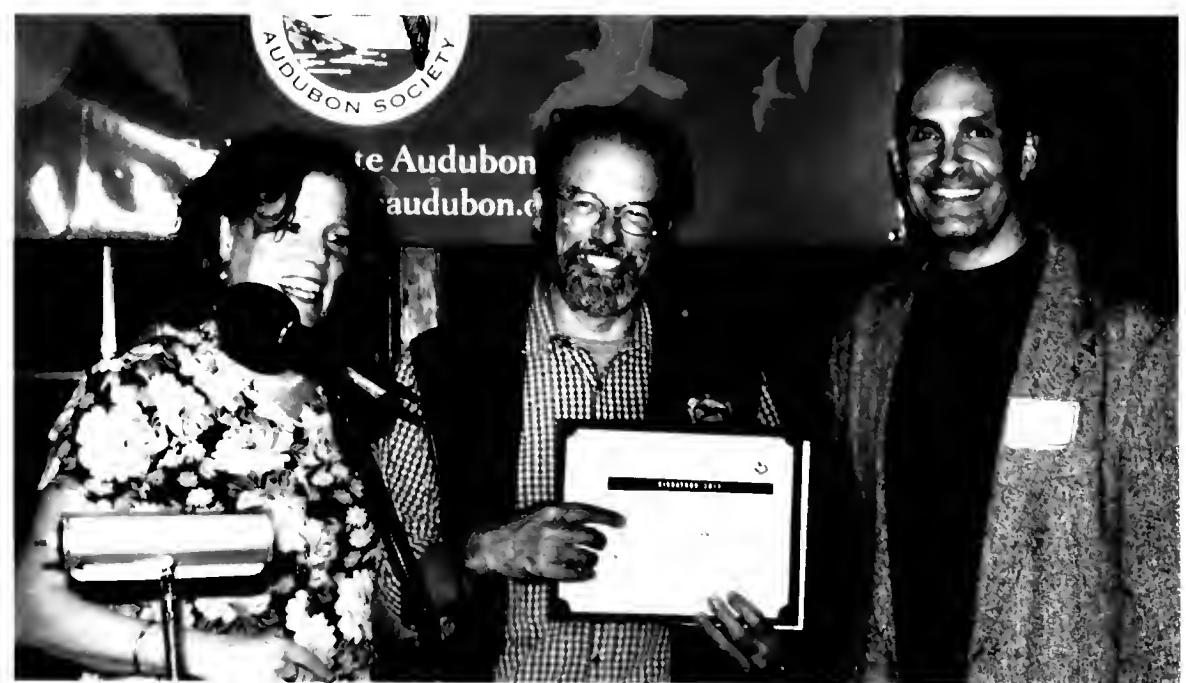
Glen Jepke received the award for Most Species in 24 Hours from Diane Ross-Leech, GGAS board president, on behalf of his team, The Dippers.



Chan Saelee and Ezekiel Perez, recipients of inaugural Miles T. McKey Memorial Scholarships.



Sam and Maria Swiss of Scope City San Francisco, recognized as Premiere Sponsors.



Bob Lewis, flanked by Diane Ross-Leech and Mark Welther, earned the award for Top Fundraising Trip Leader.

Birdathon Donors

Thank you for supporting Golden Gate Audubon's successful Birdathon 2011!

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GGAS CLASSES from page 1

Randall Museum and taught Wild Birds of San Francisco at the San Francisco Botanical Garden. Dave Quady started his class on North American owls at the Oakland Museum of California, then moved it to the Golden Gate Audubon Berkeley office when GGAS began sponsoring other classes on its own. The newest venue, as of this August, is the EcoCenter in Heron's Head Park, one of San Francisco's popular birding hotspots (see page 8).

Pick a sample year or two over the past six, and you could have immersed yourself in natural history by enrolling in classes on birds of the Bay Area and birdsong in spring; birds of the Sierra in summer; shorebirds in fall; and owls in winter. If you still had time on your schedule, you could have squeezed in a class on identifying wildflowers, or creating a backyard habitat for birds and butterflies, or learning about mushrooms.

Many birders like classes with a specialized focus, whether shorebirds, raptors, or birdsong. Patricia Bacchetti, who has birded in three continents outside North America and was on a winning Birdathon 2011 team, took one of Denise Wight's birding-by-ear classes this past winter. "I'm a proficient

birder now," she says, "but being able to revisit a well-laid-out plan of listening is valuable. Denise emphasized what you would hear in winter—contact calls, little chip notes. Once you know the basics, you can concentrate on subtle details like these. For this reason, the classes are a great resource."

Other birders, feeling that repetition enhances their experience, return to the same classes. Jacqueline Craig has signed up for Rusty and Bob's Birds of the Bay Area many times. "I take the class over and over because of reliability," she says. "I am familiar with their skills, and I know where the field trips go. That repetition has helped me build my birding acumen over the years. Other people have also been consistent participants. You develop wonderful relationships and appreciate the camaraderie." Jacqueline has also taken Rusty and Eddie's session of Birds of the Sierra for several summers. "I was unfamiliar with Sierra Valley and Yuba Pass before I took the class. The group goes to other locations, too. Rusty and Eddie know places that I would not have discovered without the classes."

Most of the Golden Gate Audubon classes adhere to a template proven to be both popular and effective. Instruction in the classroom

provides essential information for the field trips that follow.

Marissa Ortega-Welch, GGAS Eco-Education Program Coordinator, liked this approach when she took Dave Quady's Owls of North America. "Dave's lectures, illustrated by great photos, made me realize that owls are more abundant than I thought," Marissa says. "And the field trips are a wonderful part of the class. On one trip we were treated to the territorial song of the Great Horned Owl and the repetitive whistle of the Northern Saw-Whet. On the next, we saw Burrowing Owls in a field and Barn Owls hunkered down on a nest. On the final trip, a Spotted Owl hooted and then flew down to a low branch and offered us an amazing view. This class introduced me to some great owl sites and has inspired me to sleep in occasionally and bird at night instead."

Is there a class you wish Golden Gate Audubon would offer? Or would you like to teach a class or partner with someone who could teach it with you? Or do you know someone who would be a superb instructor? Please share your ideas and suggestions. And keep your eye on upcoming issues of the *Gull* and the GGAS website for more classes to come.